

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,
MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR
LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST,
BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS
PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED, HE DE-
SCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN
FROM THE DEAD, HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND
SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER
ALMIGHTY, FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE
THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST; THE HOLY CATH-
OLIC CHURCH; THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS; THE
FORGIVENESS OF SINS; THE RESURRECTION OF THE
BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.
AMEN.

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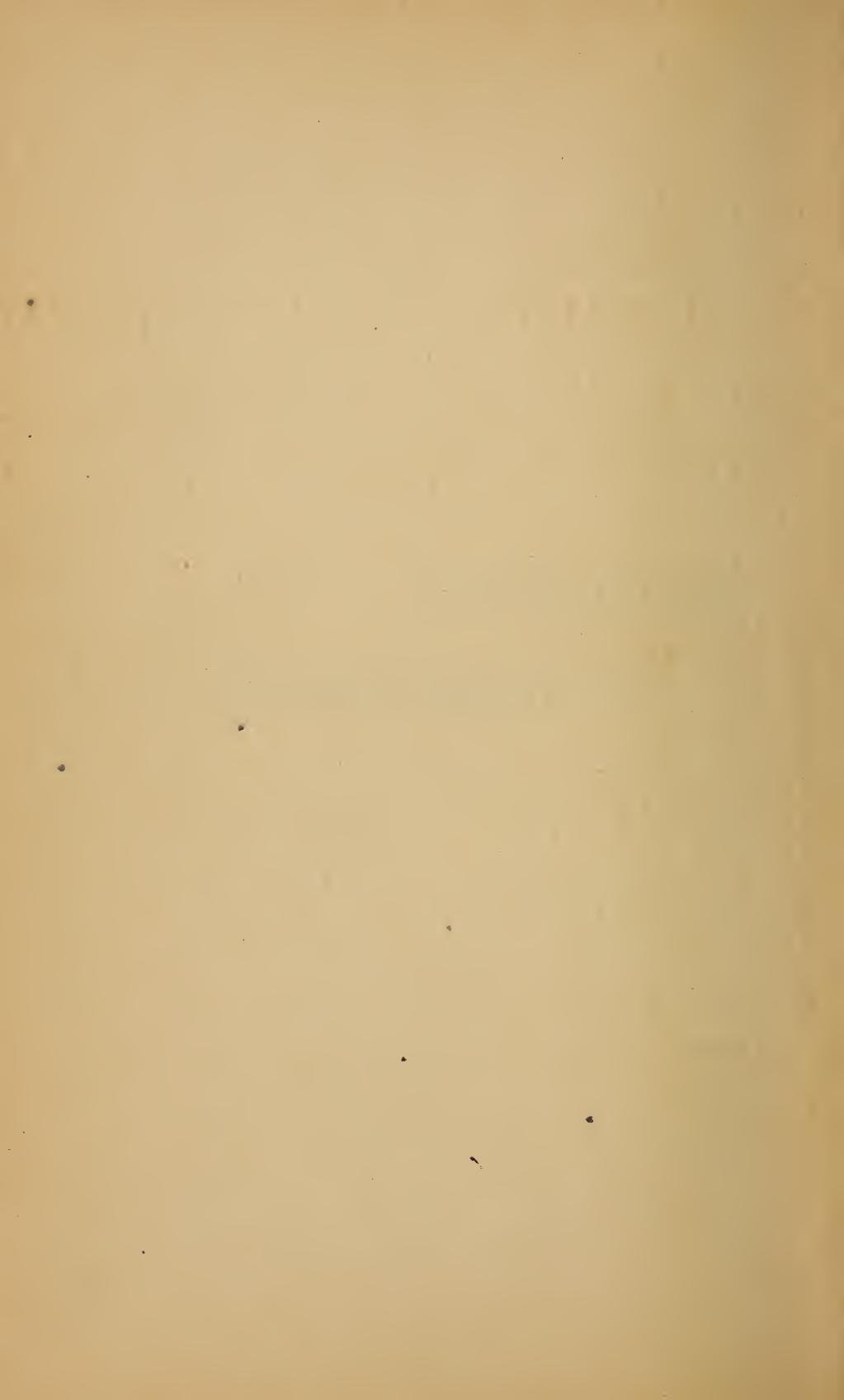
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I BELIEVE IN GOD

THE FATHER ALMIGHTY.



I BELIEVE IN GOD THE
FATHER ALMIGHTY.

BY
JOHN HENRY BARROWS.

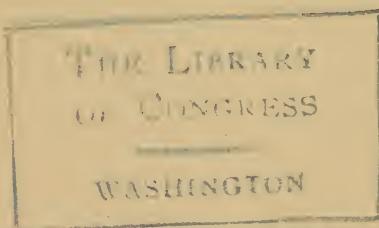
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TO THE

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN OF AMERICA,

With the prayerful hope

that this book may confirm them in the joyful faith,
with which they repeat, from its first great

words to its closing affirmations,

the golden sentences

of

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

• • •

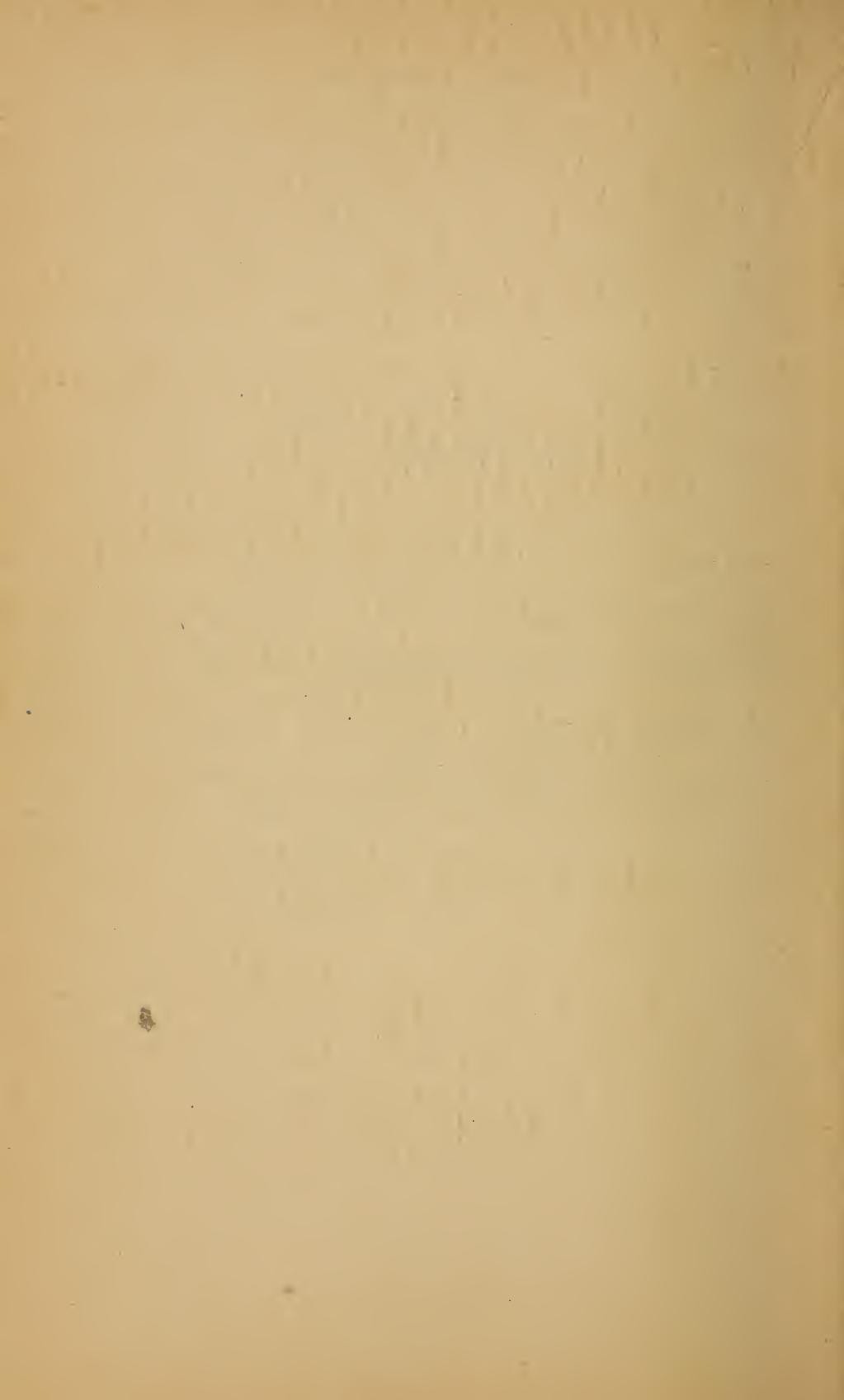
I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,

Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord ; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost ; born of the Virgin Mary ; suffered under Pontius Pilate ; was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the Holy Catholic Church ; the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

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THE STRENGTH OF THEISM.

The Strength of Theism.

“For every house is builded by some one, but He that built all things is God.” — Heb. 3:4.

• • •

IN these words the common sense of mankind finds expression. Every work of contrivance demands a contriver; every work which goes beyond the power of human organization demands a super-human creator. It is “an incomparably great thing,” as Rothe has said, “to affirm the existence of God,” and this princely thinker of Germany declares that we are indebted to modern atheistic philosophy for making us vividly conscious how grand a thing it is to affirm that there is a God. The prolonged discussions of our times are not only strengthening the foundations on which rests the practically uni-

versal belief in a Personal First Cause, are not only enlarging the popular conception of the greatness and glory of the Creator, but are also making it plain that the supreme affirmation which the human mind can make is this: "I believe in God." Resurrection, miracles, the incarnation, the atonement, are superstructures; this is the foundation.

But in our time, as in other ages, this foundation is attacked. We are informed and instructed, not so much that God is not, as that we do not know whether or not God is. That is, agnosticism is the present form of the anti-theistic spirit. We are told that science (and science is assumed to be the limit of human knowledge) neither proves nor disproves the existence of an Infinite Personal Being. This is about as far as cautious doubt ordinarily creeps. The atheist of to-day tries to keep his mind in this suspended state,

yielding neither to the evidences that God is, nor to the theories which would account for a universe without a God. A century ago, men were more positive. The revolutionary atheists of France, who had gained possession of the government, issued a decree prohibiting the worship of God, dethroning Him from His supremacy ! In the Cathedral of Notre Dame they knelt before a new deity of their own selection, the Goddess of Reason, personified by a degraded woman. Coleridge has thus daringly depicted the spirit of that day :—

“ Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
Cries out, ‘ Where is it ? ’ ”

But such is not the usual temper of the present atheism. Its fortress is the igno-

rance of man as to what lies back of the outward appearance of things. It does not go beyond phenomena and so-called second causes. It acknowledges the facts and forces of the universe, but denies that we can go behind them and affirm anything positive of their origin. In this denial it is guilty of stupendous folly. "Every house is builded by some one," says the general reason of the race. "Yes," is the reply, "but as to who or what built all things we cannot know, for we were not there."

In maintaining this position, modern atheism deems itself very courteous, modest, and wise. It does not claim to be happy; it does not pretend to be contented. Some of its literature is a long-drawn wail, sinking occasionally into a whine. This is natural. The intellect looking into this wonderful universe and refusing the only natural explanation of

it, must be restless. And the heart that is made for worship, acknowledging no supreme object of adoration, must be equally uneasy and unsatisfied. And when the floods of sorrow and the terror of death overwhelm and oppress the soul, and a positive faith in an omnipotent love is the foremost need, then it is that modern agnosticism leaves its victims in such pitiful despair that human nature rises up against it. The intellect as well as the heart is hostile to this kind of knownnothingism. It may be as foolish for a man to say, "I do not know," as to say, "I deny." Here is a book called the Bible, printed on finest paper, silk-sewed, bound and published in Oxford, one of the miracles of the printer's art. Taking it in his hand, one person says, "A skillful man must have planned and executed the printing of this beautiful book." He speaks the world's common sense. Another man

takes up the Bible, and says, "I really do not know whether a human being printed this book or not. I never was in Oxford, and I certainly did not see the making of the book." A third man takes up the Bible and says, "I deny that any human being printed this book." It is plain that the second and third men have stultified human reason and have stultified it equally, unless the cautious doubter manifests even a little more imbecility than the stubborn denier.

The vice of agnosticism is that it is an attack on the trustworthiness of the human faculties. It has been wisely said "that if a man cannot know God, he cannot know anything," that is, rationally and scientifically. The scientist makes all his investigations on the basis of certain principles, certain self-evident truths, and the common mind acts in the same way in coming to a knowledge of God. The

scientist proceeds on the theory of causation—that is, that every change must have an adequate cause—on the belief in nature's rationality and uniformity, and working on this basis, he trusts his conclusions. Knowledge gained in this, the right way, he holds as certain in spite of the difficulties and inconceivabilities which beset some of his conclusions. These difficulties it has been said belong to science as well as to theology. If a man is to distrust his faculties when they lead him to God, then he must distrust them always. False in one part, they are not to be believed in another. Partial agnosticism leads to complete agnosticism, as has been frequently shown. The truth is, that man has such multiplex and overwhelming evidences for believing in God that agnosticism is the suicide of his rational nature. It is administering poison to all his nobler powers. It is a degrad-

ing prostration of himself before what have been called "the hideous idols of negation." It is remaining "an eternal infant," that is, a living savage. Of course most agnostics deny or endeavor to conceal the fact that their system leads logically to universal skepticism. But such is the truth. The knowledge which men gain of the outer world rests on the trustworthiness of certain self-evident truths which are equally the basis of science and theology. The death of one is the destruction of the other. All must confess that theism is the constitutional belief of man, and that atheism, in any of its shapes, is the unnatural and uncertain mental attitude of the few who must be regarded as the eccentrics of our race. It will be indefinitely less of a task to overturn the Copernican theory of astronomy, than to root out the belief in a personal God. The very generation when materialistic

atheism has been most active and confident is the generation in which Christian theism has achieved its widest and swiftest conquests. Appeals to man's ignorance of what God was doing in the ages previous to the beginning of this universe, and to his ignorance of how the Infinite One created what was not before, are about as effective blows against "the most venerable and general of human beliefs," as would be an attempt to disprove the existence of Julius Cæsar because we were not clearly informed concerning every part of his career, or as would be the denial that there are oxen and elephants in the world because science cannot explain how grass enters the mouth of one animal and is transformed into an ox's hoof and into the mouth of another animal and is transformed into an elephant's tusk. Man is finite, and that his knowledge of the Eternal and Infinite God is limited

and shrouded by much of mystery, is what he has always confessed from the time of Job until now, and what the Christian believes that God Himself has asserted in His revealed Word. This is also true of man's acquaintance with material things. But limited knowledge of God is not an argument against the Divine existence any more than our limited acquaintance with geology and astronomy disproves the existence of the palpable earth and the clear-shining stars.

Whence arises the firm human faith in a Divine Person? Is the Being of God a part of man's direct consciousness? I am not careful to defend this position, but I confidently hold that there is that in the human mind which either implies God or leads immediately to Him. Man has a self-evident knowledge of principles which are universal laws of thought. He perceives without proof that two parallel lines

can never inclose a space. This is a self-evident truth. He perceives without proof that every effect must have a cause. These are universal laws of thought, true everywhere in all times, and they imply or presuppose that the universe is grounded in reason, and in this conviction is wrapped up the germ of theistic belief. Dr. Samuel Harris has said that "the existence of God, the absolute reason is a necessary prerequisite to the possibility of scientific human knowledge." Again, it is natural for the human mind to ask not only, Who made it? but, What for? Our children put this question daily, not only of things which we make and do, but also of what are called works of Nature. Nature to the child's mind teaches the doctrine of final causes, that is, Nature appears to harmonize with the conviction that whatever exists is for some end. There is a purpose running through creation.

It was this antecedent conviction which led Harvey, Copernicus, and Kepler to their great scientific discoveries. And in this general conviction that everything is for some end, is wrapped up the thought of God, the Divine Purposer. What are called evidences or proofs of God's existence are only the fervid sunbeams falling on the strong predispositions to belief that slumber in the human soul. Even the leader of modern agnosticism, Herbert Spencer, acknowledges that "the assumption of the existence of a first cause of the universe is a necessity of thought." And yet he pronounces this first cause unknown and unknowable. We must not, however, expect him to be consistent. As ex-President Hill has written, "Herbert Spencer, refusing to assign attributes to the first cause, still expresses his faith in the truthfulness, faithfulness, wisdom, and beneficence of the order of Nature."

Manifestly, agnosticism is a hard and devious road for this blind giant to walk in. If the assumption of the existence of a first cause is a necessity of thought, and the order of Nature is uniform, wise, and good, then uniformity, wisdom, and goodness would naturally seem to belong to the first cause. In this case he is not unknowable.

Atheism is wrecked when brought face to face with the chief facts of the universe. The first fact is Matter. Matter had a beginning, otherwise it is eternal. Why not hold that matter is eternal? Let us first inquire, What is matter? Chemical science reduces it to about seventy elements. Let us suppose that these seventy elemental substances are eternal, self-existent. Let us not ask at present how these seventy dead gods came into existence, but let us grant their eternity. We are forced to inquire, "Which is more

rational, the common belief of mankind in one Eternal, Spiritual Being, or this fanciful hypothesis of seventy eternal, material beings?" And then we are forced to ask, "How did these seventy stony, or metallic, or gassy gods, not having life, get the power to transform themselves, not only into this earth, so crowded with marks of intelligence, so swarming with vitality, not only into the wheeling congregations of isolated worlds, but into such beings as we know ourselves to be?" The absurdity of maintaining the eternity of matter as an escape from the difficulty of believing in an eternal mind, is conspicuous, and becomes even more so when, following the newest science, which teaches that the present universe is not eternal, that it had a beginning, we trace the world back to innumerable atoms, as the primordial elements out of which has sprung what we see and know. Are these

molecules self-originated, self-existent? Are we to sacrifice human faith in one God to this countless host of atomic gods? The pitiable spectacle has been sometimes witnessed, of men's forsaking the faith in the Divine Spirit, who is eternal and unchangeable in His being, power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, and bowing down in degrading fetich-worship at the shrine of the new polytheism, adorning in love-sick folly and crowning with garlands of rhetoric these deified atoms which Sir John Herschel instructs us have all the appearance of "manufactured articles." Not content with the "conclusion that 'Hamlet' and 'Paradise Lost' are simply products of molecular motion, that the Iliad is only the result of the decomposition of brain matter, or that the sublime strains of Isaiah and Habakkuk are merely a posturing of polarized atoms,"—not content with such outrageous folly, shall mod-

ern wisdom bestride the molecule and say, "Down, O God of Abraham and Moses and Newton! I have found the ultimate somewhat that supersedes the Infinite Mind"? This is truly the landing which an atheistic science has made on the shores of its wild speculation. It is plain that the reason can find no resting place in any theory of eternal matter, whether it thinks of seventy elements or of countless millions of primal germs; for the old, persistent question, "Who made these?" still arises, and thus we are driven into the arms of One who is independent, self-existent, eternal. "If all the world," says Janet, "is contingent, the cause must be absolute." If, following backward the changes in the visible universe, we finally reach that beginning which science now affirms, we must then repeat the ancient truth, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Another fact over which all forms of atheism hopelessly stumble, is the fact of intelligent order in the universe. Matter not only exists, but is arranged in countless and marvelous adaptations. Intelligence is everywhere displayed. As Professor Fisher has written, "To talk of thought without a thinker is to utter words without a meaning." In what I now say the argument from intelligence in the universe will be linked with the argument from causation. From the observation of orderly phenomena, man infers a creating and governing intelligence. Nothing is more certain than that everything which begins to be has an adequate cause. The principle of causation which leads us inevitably toward God is at the foundation of scientific inquiry. The scientist may stop with the second causes, deeming these the proper limits of science; but the mind never rests there, for the

principle of causation is never content until it reaches a first cause. This style of argument, from effect to cause, which is, as I have said, at the basis of science, and which to the great mass of men is entirely satisfactory, is also the Biblical style of reasoning, from the things that are made to the infinite power and Godhood of the Maker, from the human house built to the human house-builder, from the world-house built to the world-maker, God. "We are entitled, we are required," says Dr. McCosh, "to trust and follow these principles." But Mr. Hume says that while it is proper for us, on seeing a watch, to argue a watch-maker, it is not allowable for us, on seeing the world, to argue a world-maker. Why?—Because we have seen a watch made and have not seen a world made. But I am sure that a savage who has never seen a watch made, on finding one in the desert, would con-

clude at once that the machine had a contriver, not because he ever saw one put together, but because he saw evidences that it had been put together. I never saw the world put together, but I see evidences that it has been put together.

But evolution, we are told, displaces this carpenter theory of creation. The universe was not put together, but grew like a seed. Quite possibly this is true. But evolution, which is only a law of growth, neither disproves a Divine Power at the root of growth, a Divine Purpose in the end of growth, nor a Divine Wisdom running all through the process of growth. If evolution be true, then we have new and even stronger argument for the abiding activity of an Infinite Mind in all Nature. An acorn is more wonderful than a Corliss engine. In the acorn is wrapped up a tiny organism, not only exhibiting a multitude of adaptations to soil, air, and

light, but also gifted with the power of reproducing itself and covering the earth, in the lapse of centuries, with forests of giant oaks. The Corliss engine wears out in time, and in it is no machinery for producing similar mechanisms which shall also construct others of like power, and so on without limit. A universe built like an engine or a house requires God; but a universe which began as a seed or a multitude of seeds requires not only an Omnipotent Creator at the start, but also an ever-acting Divine Wisdom in the complex unfolding, the intricate and manifold adjustment and developments of Nature, through all the incomprehensible periods of the past and the perpetual wonder of the present. For evolution, it has been well said, "gives not simply a new and truer doctrine of the Creator but a sublimer and diviner doctrine of Providence."

But it is objected, rather for the sake

of argument than for the sake of truth, that if every effect must have an adequate cause, if contrivance implies a contriver, music a musician, design a designer, world-making a world-maker, then the world-maker himself is an effect. Back of him must be another creator, and so on in an infinite series. To this jugglery I answer, first, that the God to whom the arguments from design and causation lead us, does not exhibit any marks of contrivance. Nature appears to be arranged, built, "gotten up." God does not so appear to human thought. Nature appears to be an effect. God does not appear to be an effect. Secondly, if one cause is sufficient to explain the result, it is unreasonable to multiply causes. The "infinite series" folly needlessly multiplies causes. And thirdly, it leaves the universe still unexplained. If there be an infinite chain of causes, we have here a

stupendous effect which demands a stupendous cause. It has been truly said that the entire chain cannot hang upon nothing, and that an endless adjournment of causes is a process which is meaningless and useless, and in which reason can never acquiesce.

The human mind is in endless protest against that mental suicide which leaves the stupendous effect which we behold about us without a cause. It is generally in endless war with any theory which demands that intelligence should be explained by non-intelligence. The unperverted mind of man is in sympathy with Napoleon on the Mediterranean ship-deck, as, pointing to the stars, he confuted and silenced the atheist generals about him. It is in sympathy with Lord Herbert, in pointing to the wonders of the human body as showing forth the skill of a Divine Creator. It is in sympathy with Chalmers,

in pointing to the marvels of the human eye, as a pregnant and luminous inscription of Divinity, fuller and plainer, as he believed, than "can be gathered from a broad and magnificent survey of the skies, lighted up though they be with the glories and wonders of astronomy." And when, with the student who pries with his microscope into the cell-structures of plant and animal organization, the human mind looks as deeply as it is able into the hidden recesses of Nature, beholding a tiny, colorless mass so minute that a hundred of equal dimensions would not cover the width of a razor's edge, and marks this little cell, precisely the same in oak and eagle and the human body, but nevertheless weaving all the various tissues of structure, making now a violet and then a vulture, now a geranium and then a giraffe, now an elm and then an elephant, now a mollusk and then a man, it is awe-

struck and worshipful, knowing that this little shuttle, so constantly busy in making the marvels of the universe, must have back of it the skilled hand of an Infinite and Ever Present God.

There are other rocks which make shipwreck of atheism and agnosticism, and which furnish new and still more striking proofs of the folly which would write "No God" on the heavens above, which the Creator has starred with His name, and on the soul of man, which He has graven with the imperishable truths of personality and the moral law. But our present study has, I believe, shown us anew that the being of God is the chief fact of human knowledge, denying or attempting to discredit which, we find that all nature fights against us, as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. It ought then to be evident to all that, since there is a Divine Power above

us and about us, He is the greatest concern of our lives. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. This being true, can anything be more of an outrage to all that is noblest in humanity than to make the chief concern of our lives a matter of irreverent jest? Is there anything more shocking than to behold men standing, with conceited smirks on their faces and blasphemies issuing from their lips, in the presence of this burning bush of the universe wherein God dwelleth? A human hyena, howling about the graves of Washington and Lincoln, is an object to be respected by the side of the impudent jackal who boldly drags the carcass of his own folly and foulness into the splendor of the Great White Throne. We are living in the hand of God the Creator. What spirit but that of reverence becomes the human soul? When Daniel made

his accusation against Belshazzar, he reproached him for his profane pride, and closed with the declaration, “And the God in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.”

GOD'S THREE REVELATIONS
OF HIMSELF.

God's Three Revelations of Himself.

"The God that made the world and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing He himself giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things; and He made of one blood every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and

device of man. The times of ignorance, therefore, God overlooked: but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead.”—Acts 17:24-31.

• • •

THIS passage is taken from Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill, before the curious Athenian philosophers, among whom religion had apparently reached the beginning of the agnostic stage. The truths which the Apostle so skillfully and boldly proclaimed, sweep nearly the entire range of theistic argument. With the missionary's assurance and ardor, and with an ancient orator's consummate tact he brought home his message. God's revelation in Nature as the Creator of the worlds; His revelation in man, who is God's child; His

revelation in His Son, our Lord, by whom the world is to be judged, and the crowning assurance of His self-disclosure which comes to us through Jesus Christ by His resurrection from the dead,—this is the outline of the most famous utterance ever spoken by man, and will indicate the current of our thoughts in this discourse.

I have already shown that agnosticism is an attack on the trustworthiness of the human faculties, that it logically destroys the ground on which all belief rests. I have shown that the Spirit which says, "I do not know," is as foolish as that which says, "I deny," when the question of doubt and denial concerns God. I have shown that the evidences for the Divine existence are rays of light falling on germs of theistic belief already in the mind. As Professor Shedd has written: "The strenuous endeavor of atheism to prove there is no God, proves that there

is one. For if the Deity were really a nonentity like a griffin, . . . there would be no effort to invalidate it, but the same utter indifference respecting the idea of God would prevail among mankind as respecting the idea of a griffin." I have shown that atheism and agnosticism are hopelessly wrecked by the two facts — the facts of matter and of intelligent order in the universe — and that we are driven to the arms of Him whom Paul preached on Mars' Hill, the God who made the world and all things therein.

Of the facts in God's revelation of Himself in the natural world, I shall now speak of only one, the fact of motion. If the spiritual origin of matter be demanded by our reason, equally does reason require that motion be explained by the activity of spirit. If, with Professor Grove and the physicists, we call motion one of the affections of matter, and discern in matter a

manipulation of force, we are equally compelled to seek the explanation of force in an intelligent will. "The conception of force," as Dr. Whewell says, "involves the idea of cause." Motion, which implies moving power, and which comes to our thought in such various forms as heat, electricity, light, magnetism, chemical affinity, gravity, vital force in plants, vital force in animals, is a chief phenomenon of the universe. Everything we behold is in motion. An object may be relatively at rest, as for example, a building, or some person in it, but building and person are resting on a body called the earth that is whirling eastward a thousand miles an hour. The motions of the universe are orderly, mathematical. The forces we know are regulated, in the sense of being in accord with discoverable law. They are also connected, so that one force has its equivalent in others. They are inter-

changeable. Heat may be transformed into electricity, and electricity into vital force. They are connected with anterior forces and are perpetuated in new movements. Thus there is a unity in force, necessitating the thought of one creating and upholding Power. All motions which we know, are in accordance with certain laws, but law is only a method of motion and is not the source of motion. Law points to a law-maker and an executive, and since intelligence is in the law, it must inhere in Him who ordained it.

When we think of these so-called forces at work about us, gravity drawing all worlds toward each other, vegetable forces which lift the gigantic pines on Norwegian or Californian hills as high as the lofty cathedral spires, the immeasurable potencies of light and heat, and then learn that they have been reduced by science to one force, and that philosophic science is com-

mitted to the truth that force has a spiritual origin ; when we remember that universal life is a correlated series of motions, orderly, harmonious, unified, we stand in the luminous center of theistic belief, and the thought of God is as inevitable as is the thought of Handel when we are listening to the majestic, on-sweeping, multitudinous and yet unified harmonies of his greatest oratorio. The universe, when seen through the lens of this truth, that these manifold forces of Nature working in an intelligible harmony must have a spiritual origin, becomes an impressive revelation of God. We begin to read the alphabet of His omnipotence. A child's imagination is awed by the power of fabled giants, but the forces of Nature make human might, though it should equal that of Milton's warring angels in Heaven, seem puerile. What are all the powers of mankind compared with the force of

the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, which not only uplifted and overthrew a city, making the solid earth undulate like the waves of the sea, but raised all Europe, from Portugal to the Highlands of Scotland, and upheaved the Atlantic from the straits of Gibraltar to the far-off American shores? This is the force of gas and fire and water and steam, God's own energy working through second causes, in terrestrial ways. But, inconceivable though such might is, it is nothing to the celestial displays of Divine Power. What pride would fill the heart of man if he should be able to build a railroad track about the earth, bridging the wide oceans, and if, on a gigantic train, he should be able to pile the Himalayas, the Andes, and the Rocky Mountains, which should be transported from continent to continent around the earth in one hour, with machinery so perfect in construction and adjustment that there should

be no noise or slightest jar, and so enduring that the colossal train might continue its rapid journey without a break, round and round our globe, unwearied for a thousand centuries. Even then the forces wielded in this Herculean labor would be Divine, though the machinery might be of human contrivance.. But what is all this to that which God is daily doing? The Andes, Himalayas, and Rocky Mountains are so small on a raised globe that their altitudes are scarcely perceptible, while the earth itself, with these tiny wrinkles on the surface, turning on its mild axle so smoothly that the sick man's slumbers are not disturbed thereby, is whirled about the sun at the rate of nineteen thousand miles an hour, and kept in its ethereal grooves without variation or shadow of turning during the long, weary cycles in which human empires rise and fall. But our earth is a pygmy by the side of Jupiter,

who moves about the solar center at a still greater speed, and the sun himself, compared with whom our earth is but a cinder of coal in the mouth of a burning volcano, is whirling at the rate of three thousand miles a minute about some vaster sun, while the multitude of suns peopling the Milky Way are speeding about some enormous center with the same inconceivable velocity. And when we remember that in order to preserve these mighty spheres in balance, two opposing forces, one of which would fling them off into space and the other of which would draw them to some greater body, need to be perfectly adjusted; when we remember that all worlds are upheld, not by keeping them at rest, but by harmonizing their vast and complex motions, we are impelled to cry out, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" And as man's pride of power is broken in the presence of the daily round

of the universe, he will repeat the question of that profound poet of the early dawn of the world, who, like all the great seers of our race, found God in Nature and her majestic movements: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth the Twelve Signs in their season, or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?"

But however luminous and suggestive the disclosures of God which come to us from without, they are pale before the effulgent light which burns in our own souls. Effectually barring the progress of atheism and agnosticism is the fact of the human mind, with its consciousness, self-determination, freedom, multiplied intellectual powers, moral convictions, and religious ideas and emotions. Man is the stumbling-block of modern materialism. He is also the rock and fortress of theism. God becomes real to us through ourselves.

Coming to a knowledge of our own personality, we arrive at a knowledge of the Divine personality. The fundamental fact in the whole structure of our knowledge is consciousness. You are, and know that you are. You are yourself and not another. You are a mind having capabilities many, emotions various and mighty. You are a will with self-determination and freedom. You have not always been. You know your dependence. You know your moral responsibility. You are in the grasp of something which imperatively demands that you act righteously ; and you are equally in the grasp of a reason which demands that you be explained as an effect. If there is intelligence in you, there must be intelligence in your Creator ; otherwise the effect would contain elements not involved in the cause ; and this remains true whether you date your creation back twenty, sixty, or unnumbered

millions of years. If there is personality in you, there must be personality in Him who made you. If there is a moral law at work in your soul, the Creator must be the moral law-giver. The Cilician poet whom Paul quoted on Mars' Hill expressed the truth which we must come to believe when we know ourselves: "We also are His offspring."

Materialism breaks down utterly in the attempt to show that man is the son of an atom and not the son of the Lord God Almighty. Even Herbert Spencer's chief apostle in America, John Fiske of Cambridge, acknowledges that "the progress of modern discovery, so far from bridging over the chasm between mind and matter, tends rather to exhibit the distinction between them as absolute." But the task given to materialism is not only to show that the forces of Nature and the principles of life are deduced from matter, but

that the soul with its faculties, that all ideas, that the moral law, that man's consciousness of God, are all products of matter or deductions from it. Says Dr. Henry B. Smith, "If materialism fails to deduce any of these things from matter, the entire system fails." Man is a conscious spirit, standing on the summit of creation, surveying the earth and subduing it, entering into her secret chambers with the torch of investigation, and employing her riches for ends which are spiritual. Does he himself belong to an order that is material, mechanical, fatalistic? Every emancipated, unperverted soul holds himself as of another and higher range of being than material forms and forces. While in Nature he holds himself as supernatural in the sense of being above the material order, and when his mind is exalted, he reverences his own "onlooking and inestimable spirit, beside which the stars are painted dust."

We cannot think of ourselves without thinking of God. Hence, as one of the profoundest philosophers of America has written: "No idea so impresses universal man as the idea of a God. Neither space nor time, neither life nor death, not sun, moon, or stars, so influence the immediate consciousness of man in every clime, in all generations, as does that Presence which in Wordsworth's phrase is not to be put by. This idea overhangs human existence like a firmament, and though clouds and darkness obscure it in many zones, while in others it is crystalline and clear, all human beings must live beneath it, and cannot possibly get from under its all-embracing arch." Atheism has rightly been called an insult to humanity. Man is conscious of reason and of obligation to do right; and if reason and righteousness do not rule in the universe, then he must either exalt himself as a god, which his own sense of dependence and unworthi-

ness forbids, or else he must distrust his own consciousness, and be landed in utter skepticism. He will do neither.

I remember the reverent emotions with which I walked through the splendid Museum of Natural History which bears the great name of its founder, Agassiz. There I saw the world in miniature, the curious wonders of sea and land, the treasures of all the deeps, of all the continents, and gradually a sense of awe crept into my soul, as if I had been admitted by special favor into the laboratory of the Almighty. And then I marked how these million specimens of Divine thought had been arranged, each room representing one division or subdivision of the Kingdom of Nature, each alcove exhibiting an infinite care and patience in the details of its assortment; and as I wandered on, I saw how wonderfully the great naturalist had classified his treasures, so that each

department was the vestibule to new and nobler products of the Divine workmanship. And then I thought of the comprehensive mind which had gathered and studied and placed these corals and shells and birds and creeping things and four-footed beasts which had haunted the icy shores of Labrador and the tropic vegetation of the Amazon, that mind which had discovered in the works of Nature many infallible proofs of a Divine Wisdom. And I thought of the great heart which had lovingly and patiently brooded over this superb display of the marvels of earth, the gathering of which was the chief labor of his life; so that, although thinking of the Museum, I felt myself to be in a temple where Aristotle, and Bacon, and Newton, and Cuvier, and Faraday would have worshiped God, nevertheless, thinking of Agassiz himself, I believed myself to be in a sanctuary where David and Plato and

the highest souls of all times would have seen the brightest inscriptions of the Eternal Spirit.

But to know man in his grandeur we must stand in other fanes besides those of science. There is the world-wide temple of the imagination, carpeted with blossoms of beauty and overhung with the stars of truth and love. There I see the Brahman poets singing their Vedic hymns. There I see Homer,

“The blind bard who on the Chian strand,
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssey,
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea,”

and whose resounding lines beat like war-drums and thrill like the trumpet’s ardors after eighty generations. There I see Dante, dwelling by faith in a supernatural world and making it more real to his nation than the geography of the Italian

peninsula. There I see Shakespeare, whose imaginary personages are more vivid to our minds than the neighbors across the way. There is Wordsworth, feeling in his soul the pressure of that unseen Spirit whose dwelling is everywhere, and by his cheerful insight and magic interpretations of Nature, lifting a generation to serener hights. There is Emerson questioning the rhodora,

“ Whose purple petals fallen in the pool
Made the black waters with their beauty gay,”

and believing that the same power which evoked the blossom called to it the poet-worshiper. Standing in such a temple, does atheism, does agnostic materialism, find in atoms, or blind molecular forces, the explanation of these radiant, far-seeing faculties that have woven a golden web of beauty and of music over earth and sky, and starred them with the name of God?

Has mole-eyed unbelief convicted of folly these angelic spirits who sang with the consciousness of the Eternal Spirit brooding over their souls?

It is surely not needful to contemplate further the impotence of a materialistic philosophy to account for man. It has never explained how matter could rise into self-consciousness, or into love. It has never begun to explain the birth of the moral sense. It simply commits suicide when it attempts to resolve into molecular equivalents the great righteous acts and moral sublimities of history, the courage of Martin Luther, the patriotism of Washington, the ardent unselfishness with which Wendell Phillips cast all his ambitions behind him to help the slave, the serene self-sacrifice of the American captain who, while the iron ship was sinking, and only one could escape from the hold of death, calmly gave that chance to

another. These acts belong to a sphere which materialism can no more reach than it can destroy man's faith in the Divine righteousness which rules in conscience. But there is one other temple greater than all the rest, on entering which we discover as nowhere else the impertinence of atheism and the glory of humanity. It is the temple of Religion. Men have lived with the sense of God supreme in their souls, a passion in their hearts. He has been to them the one fact and crowning reality of life. Can atheism, armed with the microscope, and prying for a thousand years, find in the atomic particles a rational explanation of that faith in a friendly God which led Abraham away from home and country and kindred into a new land, and which so wrought in his soul and life that he by it was enabled to open in history that new order of things which controls human civilization to-day?

What has agnostic materialism to say in accounting for the life of Moses who, "seeing the invisible," bore the mightiest burdens ever laid on human shoulders? Can it find latent in the stone-dust or in the rocky foundations of Mars' Hill the invincible spirit with which the Apostle Paul proclaimed his faith in Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being? Have the devout minds of the ages been deluded when they, in communion with God, have risen to holy ecstasy or poured out their souls in rhythmic aspiration? What mean the raptures of Christian faith in dying hours?

"He lifts^{*} me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go,
All heaven bursts her starry floors
And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! The gates
Roll back, and far within

For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of eternity —
One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
The Bridegroom with His Bride ! ”

What mean these devout aspirations ? Are they the twitching of diseased nerves, resulting from the anger of misplaced molecules ? What account can materialistic unbelief give of man as he appears in the temple of worship ? — None that explains him ; none that is not a monstrous absurdity, requiring of us a savage credulity more debasing than fetich-worship. And as we perceive the frantic folly to which men have been driven to escape from God, we shall more serenely repose in the faith that “ each human mind must rest on a mind sympathetic, creative, and eternally young.”

It is with a heart hushed with awe that I bring before you now the fifth and final fact which shatters atheism and agnosticism. I mean the person of Christ. A theory may be considered as a frame. A fact is a picture. If the picture is too large for the frame, the frame must be cast aside. We have found Nature too large for the theory of atheism. We have found man altogether too large. But when we bring to this frame the picture of man at his highest, the man Christ Jesus, we find ourselves endeavoring to inclose the ocean in a wine-glass and compress the stars into a crucible. Atheistic materialism, which must account for Jesus Christ as well as for other men, is compelled to pervert history and reason to bring Him to the common level, and, having done this, stumbles over His humanity as hopelessly as over the humanity of ordinary men. But taking Jesus for what the greatest

unbelievers have regarded Him, "the incomparable man, the matchless flower of our race," how shall we regard His testimony to the Divine Father? Shall we receive Newton's testimony with regard to gravity, Faraday's testimony with regard to electricity, Sir Lionel Beale's testimony with regard to cell-structure, and reject Christ's testimony with regard to the primal fact of religion, the existence and nature of God? Has not this Man an unquestionable right to speak with authority on this one theme? Has not the agnostic been rightly described as one who disbelieves the testimony of Jesus regarding God? And when Christ assures us that by doing the Father's will we shall know of the doctrine, when He gives each one a practical test of these great things of the Spirit, is He not to be believed? Has not His testimony received innumerable confirmations? Is it not a fact that

multitudes of men, bewildered by Nature and speculations about Nature, and blinded by sin, have been brought to know Jesus Christ, and have walked out into the light of Christian faith where God has been the chief moving and moulding force of their lives?

But when we regard the person of Christ without prejudgments against the supernatural, we find Him refusing to come within the categories of a sensuous philosophy, or to be explained by the laws of human heredity. We find in Him a spiritual originality which made Him lonely in the age when He lived—a “sweetness and light” that were not embittered into cynicism toward man, or darkened into distrust toward God; a self-assertion that would be madness were it not supported by a wisdom and holiness unparalleled, and withal a self-sacrifice that has bound the Christian generations to the foot of His

Cross. Failing to find any mark of sin in His life or any defect in His all-sided virtue, we perceive Him standing before us as the miracle of history, and we do not wonder at the spiritual force which from Him has rolled like an ocean-tide down the years, breaking in blessing on the shores of all the continents to-day. We do not wonder that the wisest of our race have seen in Him the brightness of a heavenly glory and the express image of the Divine Person, and, beholding Him, have rejoiced in the Father's love revealed in Him for our redemption. We do not look downward into the primitive particles of matter for the origin of that moral glory which illumined Palestine and is making the whole earth a Holy Land. We do not find in the atheist's dreams of development from atoms the faintest or remotest possibility of any explanation of that love and tenderness which transfigured the tragedy

of Calvary. Not from beneath — an evolution from matter — but from above, a revelation from God and of God, this is the explanation of Christ to which we are driven. Something divine entered humanity in Jesus. His word is the final law of the Spirit. The God He revealed is love, and through Him God becomes to us a power unto salvation. It was but natural that such a Saviour, with such a disclosure, should prove himself lord over the material world, using it to confirm his doctrine. It was but natural that a God of love, purposing to join together forever redemption from sin with the revelation of man's immortality, should have given assurance of His great intent in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

On every Lord's day we celebrate in jubilant hymns the Redeemer's rising from the tomb, whereby he is declared to be the

Son of God with power. Something happened, as one has said, in far-off Judea, on the third day after Jesus' death—something happened, which changed the world. This is a fact which unbelief cannot explain away. By this open tomb we see our God, as He is not revealed in the star-strewn and moving heavens, or in the powers of our own minds, or in the smitings of conscience. We see Him as a God—not of might merely, and wisdom, and holy law, but as God, our Friend and Saviour, bringing to us, like the sunshine of April, which "startles with crocuses the sullen earth," the warmth of heavenly love and hope. In the risen Christ He becomes to us the conqueror of sin and death. Therefore we walk out of the shadows of denial and doubt in which we may have lingered, and pour forth our gladdest hymns. Abiding with the risen Lord, atheism, with all its nightmare horrors,

is a forgotten dream. "And may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto us the spirit of wisdom in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened: that we may know what is the hope of our calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to those who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead."

The Eternity of God.

The Eternity of God.

*"From everlasting to everlasting thou
art God." — Ps. 90 : 2.*

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THESE are words from the Psalm of Mosés, and they express that view of the nature of God which was given to the Hebrew reader in the mysterious name Jehovah. From the burning bush at Horeb the Lord revealed Himself to Moses as the "I Am, the Existing One, the Eternal." The word Jehovah, is regarded as meaning "the Living" or "Self-Existent." It was a sacred word with the Hebrews, never pronounced, and expresses that aspect of the divine nature on which reverence and awe most easily fasten. The sublime conception of a God, the dwelling-place of His people in all generations, to whom a thou-

sand years are but as a watch in the night, existent in absolute perfection before the mountain ridges were lifted, or the world's foundations laid, a God before whose dateless antiquity the life of man is as grass growing up in the morning, and in the evening cut down by the mower's scythe, this sublime conception was the refuge and rock of Israel, and is a part of Israel's legacy to the Christian mind of every age.

God's eternity is thus seen to be a very ancient and familiar thought, but in the heart of all old truth is a vast realm of new truth awaiting exploration. Since we use language so thoughtlessly, since we daily pronounce words that are weighted with infinite meaning, mindless of their significance ; since, even in prayer, we are habitually employing phrases about God without ever having pondered them, it will be wise for us to contemplate the old Hebrew doctrine that God is eternal, a doc-

trine associated in the New Testament with the nature of Christ, who is declared to be "the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever;" and who said of Himself, "Before Abraham was I am." I propose then as our theme of meditation, "The Eternity of God, the Proof and Moral Uses of the Doctrine." From the Scriptural representations, it is manifest that God's existence is different in its mode from our own. "I Am," not "I have been," or "I shall be," is His wonderful name.

Thus we are carried to the edge of that insoluble mystery, so inspiring in its sublime lifting of our thoughts above ourselves, that there is with God a mode of being entirely different from our own; that all that is, or has been, or will be, is a part of His serene and ever-present consciousness; that God is to what we call time that which He is to space; that He who inhabits immensity, also and equally in-

habits eternity. Think for a moment of space. The mind sees it, and knows that if there were nothing else in the universe space would be left. The mind perceives that space extends indefinitely in all directions, that the imagination can put no Chinese wall about it, since infinite space lies beyond every inclosure which the mind can construct. The enormous distances in our solar system are but a finger's breadth in that universe which the telescope has already disclosed. But God fill-*eth* it all. Now transfer this to time. *We* know of time only by a succession of cycles or events, that is, by motions in space. But God is to time what He is to space. He filleth it all. That is, He is the habitant of a realm of changeless existence, what the Scriptures call eternity. To Him there is no past or future such as ours, no mutation of being, no learning or forgetting, but from everlasting to everlasting, a

continuous, and abiding, and perfect self-possession — a being without possibility of beginning or ending, “infinitely excelling all bounds of duration,” because Himself absolute, free from limitations, independent of time. Is not this the greatest thought that ever transfixes and transfigured the mind of man? With us time is either past, present, or future. The years come and go. But the living God, the “I Am” of Moses, dwelleth in an “eternal now,” — all that has been, is, or will be, the perpetual and abiding possession of His infinite Mind, being known to Him truly — that is, in their relations to each other as first, midst, or last — in that realm of time of which we are subjects, but equally known to His changeless intelligence. But as creatures we can but *think* of God as existing in space and time, and subjecting Himself to our limitations. The Scriptures hint at the Divine reach of be-

ing ; and Philosophy has affirmed it, as differing from ours in that it is absolved from temporal conditions. But, as created beings, we can conceive of God only as related to us, with succession of thought and activity, so that we shall sum up all that can be clearly revealed to us of God's eternity, when we declare of it that it includes these three truths, that God now is, that He has ever been, and that He ever will be. The sublime words of Moses give us the full truth. "Thou art God," God exists ; "from everlasting thou art God," God has always existed ; "to everlasting Thou art God," God will exist forever.

First, then, God is. This is the chief fact of human knowledge. Men are so predisposed to believe in God that the first evidences of his being are sufficient to produce the conviction of His existence. It is certain that men generally have recognized that they are intimately connected by

spiritual blood with the Author of all things ; that hence they are bound to worship and to please Him, and that without His favor they are plunged into despair. In view of what is observed in the world of mind and the world of Nature, men have been convinced of their origin in a supreme power, their need of a supreme love, and their peril before the supreme Author of the moral law within. The human mind, in its natural working, is strongly theistic. You sit down by a piano, and some friend with long-practiced fingers renders for you a rhapsody of Liszt or song of Mendelssohn, and you look on and listen in delighted astonishment, amazed at the sweet or intricate harmonies which the composer has written, and at the manual dexterity which throws them off lightly from the piano keys, and you will not for one moment believe that all those marvelous combinations of musical sounds were the

chance thrummings of an idiot. You lie on the rocks by the Atlantic Coast and see the foaming billows following each other to the shore with mathematic march and precision ; you listen to the musical sobbing of the waves sliding up the strand, and remember that the pallid moon and the glowing sun by their weight and heat lift the ocean up and down, ruffling his glistening mane till he roars with a voice which is heard by the capes and promontories of every zone ; you listen to the moaning wind sweeping over the sea, bringing health and freshness from the Arctic region which sends its cooling tides and breezes along the North Atlantic shore ; and then you turn from the sea, and gaze into some tiny salt pool in a hollow of the rocks, a home of life and beauty, with green mosses stretching their fairy arms over the barnacles that open their eager mouths to take the food which Nature has provided,

the whole scene a picture which no human painter can approach ; and, as you listen and gaze, no prattler of atheism will venture to tell you amid such surroundings that there is no wise Thinker in the universe, no heavenly Musician, no Celestial Artist, no Omnipotent Ruler, but you will rather give heed to the voice of the Hebrew Psalmist and say with him, "The sea is His and He made it, and His hand formed the dry land."

Some of us have looked at that white marble wonder, the Cathedral of Milan. We have stood beneath its spacious arches ; have walked about its carved pediments ; have gazed with delight at its hundreds of pinnacles and thousands of statues ; have wandered over the roof, a tropic flower-garden of sculptured stone, and, from the central spire, have looked down on the whole beautiful pile at our feet, instinct with thought and devotion, a

priceless jewel on the brow of the Queen of Lombardy, and no one could persuade us that all this strength and splendor of architecture sprang from a volcanic explosion in the marble quarries of Carrara. Such skepticism is not launched at the petty cathedrals which man has builded, and very rarely at this majestic cathedral of God, this pillared and pinnacled Cosmos of beauty and power, whose music is the chant of morning stars.

Secondly, in the doctrine of God's Eternity is contained the truth that God ever has been. This follows necessarily from the first statement that God is, or in other words, that a First Cause exists. If God is the First Cause of all that is, then He is without beginning. If He began to be, then he were not first. That which is a First Cause is uncaused. There is nothing back of a First. That which is first must be from eternity. If there ever were a

time when God was not, there is no God now. He never could have come into being, for there was nothing to cause His existence. God's life, then, never had a beginning. By searching we cannot find a period before which God was not. The mind will in vain weary itself in the effort, and yet an effort may give us a more adequate conception of the word eternal as applied to the life of God. A minute, if passed in pain, or even in silence, is long. An hour seems to us an age, if passed in dread. A week of sorrow drags very slowly to its death. A year crowded with events is so long a period that, if we were carried to its beginning, we might hardly know ourselves. But go back in thought to the time before the Civil War, and you are almost in antiquity.

Fifty years ago, many of us were not born, many were in their cradles, and those who were men and women grown,

were reading Webster's speeches in the Senate. Fifty years ago is a remote epoch. But there are some now living who remember a period still more remote. Eighty years ago there was no railroad, or steamship, or telegraph, and the West was almost an unpeopled solitude. But stand in the entrance of the old South Church in Boston, and think back more than a hundred and fifty years to the day when, at the dedication of this building on the site of an older structure, the pastor, Mr. Sewall, gave out the prophetic text: "And the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former, saith the Lord of hosts!" But God was then the dwelling place of His people, even as now. Cross the Atlantic, stand in Westminster Hall in London, and number the kings there crowned, before La Salle first sailed the waters of Lake Michigan, "before the acorn fell which grew into a keel"

for the Mayflower. But God was the dwelling place of His people, then as now. Go to Jerusalem, enter the Holy Sepulcher, lay your hand on the stone of unction which was kissed by holy lips that grew cold in death before the English nation and the English language were born, yes, a thousand years before Columbus turned his prow toward the New World. But leaving the Sepulcher, you may lay your hands on the ruins of a temple reared a thousand years before Jesus walked in Jerusalem. Or, you may stand by the Great Pyramid of Egypt, and gaze at a monument which was finished before Abraham crossed the Euphrates, aye, two thousand years before Romulus laid the foundation of Rome. But God was then the dwelling place of His people, as now. Go back to the morning of history. Walk with Adam in Paradise, and then, instructed by modern knowledge, let your

mind retire into those far-distant ages, millions of years ago, when this world was formless and empty, floating as a part of the fire-mist, and you have not reached the cradle or the birth-hour of God.

And when we have heard and heeded the voice of science declaring that these cycles of life, of which we are a part, were preceded by others enduring through millions of ages, and these by others equally vast, through whose numberless centuries worlds slowly came into being, planets emerged from nebulous vapors, and heat and ice worked their miracles in upheaving continents, and grinding the rocky promontories into the soils out of which vanished forms of organized life were builded ; when we remember that all the incalculable periods which geology and astronomy disclose, with vast suns waning slowly through epochs innumerable, are but an instant to the æons that preceded them, a moment's

ripple of life beside the oceanic expanses of infinitude, an insect's flutter and gleam after sidereal ages and cycles of ages, rolling back into the immensities of time, even then we have not reached the beginning of God, of whom Moses said, "He is from everlasting;" of whom Isaiah declared that "He inhabiteth eternity."

But thirdly, involved in the truth of God's eternity, is the doctrine, not only that God is, and ever has been, but that He ever will be. He who is "from everlasting" must be "to everlasting." It is impossible that that which has been, in infinite and undiminished life from all eternity, should ever know diminution or cessation of being. God can suffer no hurt, can experience no decay. He cannot be destroyed by another, being omnipotent. He cannot destroy Himself, being perfect. Therefore we may send our strongest-winged imaginations, not only backward

but forward, and never reach the limitations of God's endless being. All our calculations show how futile is the effort to compass the thought of God's endless eternity.

Men have imagined that one drop in the ocean should be removed in a million of years, and then, after another million of years, one other drop should be taken away, until the wide-reaching immensities and profundities of the sea had been exhausted, down to the rocky foundations of the great deep ; but such a period of time is only one moment with the eternal God. Men have imagined a bird sent out to the earth, and taking one grain of sand and flying far away to the sun, and after a thousand years, returning for another grain of sand, and this long-winged flight continued through ages after ages unnumbered, until the mighty earth had vanished, and until all the other planets had been removed,

and until other systems of worlds, beside some of which this world is but a speck, had been transported and heaped upon our sun ; but in God's eternity all this would be but an instant, a mathematical moment, which, like a mathematical point, has no dimensions. The eternity of God, instead of ending, would not have suffered the least diminution. Eternity is the life-time of the Almighty ; existence without beginning or ending, without birth or death, infancy or age. He who is from everlasting is to everlasting, the high and lofty One, inhabiting Eternity.

From the contemplation which our argument has forced upon us, it will be felt, First, that the conception of God's eternity is a most powerful incentive to worship, for it is not a part of God that is possessed of this sublime attribute, but His whole Infinite Nature. His power is from everlasting to everlasting. Not one

slightest element of force has ever been subtracted, or ever will be taken therefrom. And so God's knowledge and wisdom are eternal. He has never been learning, and He has never forgotten. "Known unto God are all His works from eternity." So, too, of His mercy, His justice, and His holiness. They are from everlasting and they endure forever. In him the venerableness of immemorial antiquity is united with the splendor of immortal youth. He is the Ancient of Days, yet fresh with the dews of an eternal morning. We are adding year by year to our knowledge and experience, seeking new truth and new joy. But we are also leaving behind us something of the beauty and freshness of life's morning hours. The glory of the splendid dawn dies, as Wordsworth sings, "into the light of common day." Not so with God; eternally old, he is immortally young; the same in all His

adorable perfections, yesterday, to-day, and forever, “without variableness or shadow of turning.”

When you see a great and holy man, weighted with the wisdom of seventy years, venerable with prayer and devout meditation, a man who has seen two generations pass to their echoless graves, you stand in reverence before such a life. But, while you revere, your sad thought flies onward to the swift-coming day, when, amid tolling bells and tearful crowds, the good man shall be laid away in the ground which his footsteps hallowed, and men shall mourn that his voice of heavenly wisdom is forever silenced. But suppose that this man had lived on the earth from the beginning of time, had been the contemporary of Adam, and Noah, and Moses, and David, and Paul, and Augustine, and Luther, and Washington ; suppose that the “good, gray head” was venerable with

seventy centuries, instead of seventy years, of meditation and experience; suppose that he had been the companion of patriarchs of the elder world; that he had watched the Syrian stars in the tent-door with Abraham, and had sat with Jesus beneath the olive-trees outside Jerusalem; suppose he had seen the first stone of the Pyramids planted in Egyptian sand, and the gilded cross placed above St. Peter's dome, and had himself built the first temple of Christian worship on the shores of America; and suppose that, with all his weight of years, he was still in the hey-day of youthful life, and you knew that he would yet watch a hundred centuries to their death, in the ages to come, until his Master had subdued all the earth by His reconciling love, with what augmented awe and reverence would you salute the wise and holy man of God whose life had been parallel with the life of humanity.

But what is even such a life to that of God? It is less than the first falling sand in the hour-glass. Before creation began, God is, the great Jehovah, the Eternal, "I Am," resplendent with the power and wisdom and goodness by which all worlds came into being, and perfect in that holiness that burneth forever, the consuming fire of the all-righteous God, who from eternity to eternity doeth no sin and suffereth no change!

The ninetieth Psalm, the Psalm of Moses, is a trumpet-call to adoration. "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." And David answers with a note equally worshipful, "They shall perish, but Thou remainest, and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold

them up, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." The mighty evolutions of the past, which science is disclosing, are illustrations of God's eternity, calling us to our knees. And how we may well commiserate those in our time, who, gazing at these stupendous unfoldings, see no eternal Father.

"Mourn not for them that mourn
For sin's keen arrow with its rankling smart ;
God's hand will bind again what he hath torn,
He heals the broken heart.
But weep for him whose eye
Sees in the midnight skies a starry dome,
Thick sown with worlds that whirl and hurry by,
Yet give the heart no home ;
Who marks through earth and space
A strange dumb pageant pass before a vacant
shrine,
And feels within his inmost soul a place
Unfilled by the divine."

But, secondly, God's eternity introduces the thoughtful heart into a boundless field of consolation. When the Archbishop of Canterbury left the Cathedral after his consecration, the English crowds were wont to shout after him, "Remember eternity!" "Remember eternity!" This word of solemn monition I would transform into a word of comfort, and say to every believing heart, wounded by affliction and burdened with care, "Remember eternity." It is the habitation of God. From everlasting the Infinite Father has been mindful of you, who were "chosen of Him before the foundation of the world," and who are not to be snatched from Him by the principalities and powers of evil, or to be separated from His love in Christ Jesus by things present or things to come. God's covenant with us is sure, because He is eternal. He who hath loved us from everlasting abides to everlasting to fulfill

all His promises. Heaven and earth pass away, but the word of the Lord, who is eternal, endureth forever.

Science and revelation both declare that this world shall be burned up and become, let us suppose, like the gray ashen moon, the cinder of a consumed planet. And we are far less abiding than this dear old world on which the sun has shined so long. And what we love most is as transient as ourselves. Household friends are borne away by the flood of years, "sweetest lives overwhelmed and lost to sight." Cherished hopes come forth in vigor — fresh buds in May, gorgeous leaves in October, dead leaves in December. Storms beat on every side, but the children of God are joined to an eternal life. The restless mutations of earth disturb not the King in heaven. Cruelty and persecution have smitten the Church of Christ, till hearts grew faint, and some eyes have turned to

the high dome above, expecting the stars to whirl from their courses and make a "pathway for the coming Judge." But in darkest hours there have not wanted those whose faith rested serenely on the unshaken throne of the Eternal God. His patience is undisturbed, to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday, and whose "Providence moves through time," it has been said, "as the gods of Homer through space. He makes a step, and ages have rolled away."

Why not throw every burden of life on the bosom of Eternal Love? Sorrow and loss rob us of treasure and of joy—but our best friend is One, who, older than the everlasting hills, abides unchanged when hills perish in smoke. Our Father needs His children and will call them home. We are to expect no Buddhist's heaven, the dew-drop of life slipping at last into the "shining sea" of a passionless

repose, but something infinitely sweeter and more ennobling, even a conscious immortality. Let heaven be to you as glorious as the Divine Word makes it, and think not that your hopes are unreal, for the blissful mansions, and the golden streets, and the far-gleaming battlements of the Christian Zion all rest securely on the truth, and the love, and the being of the Eternal God.

And, thirdly, this sublime attribute of God is a continuous warning to all wickedness, disloyalty, and unbelief. Sin never seems more presumptuous than when considered as an affront to the Eternal God. It is refusing to bow the heart to the supremely Adorable. It is robbing God of what is due His infinite excellence. It is the pride that prefers its own way to the counsel of the Everlasting, who saith, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" It

is the audacity of an insect of the hour despising the ancient sun in the heavens. It is the conceit of an infant child seizing the scepter of government from the hand of its reverend Father and King. It is worshiping the things which God hath made more than the Eternal Creator, and this is pouring contempt on Him before whom the angels sing with veiled faces, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

O how wicked and pitiable is the pride which affronts God's eternal being, despising His eternal law, and defying his eternal justice, and which is certain to be smitten by His eternal wrath. For if our transgressions have not been covered over by the Redeemer's blood and thus blotted from His book of remembrance, then, as the Psalmist declares, they are all set, even our secret sins, in the light of His

countenance ; all the iniquities of the past of which we may be oblivious, all the greed and worldliness which He calls idolatry, and all the voluntary rejection of our Saviour, are set in the light of His face, to whom a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. There they are, perpetual offences to His eternal holiness, and we shall confront them and learn by experience infinitely sad that God's warnings are not idle words. When a ship is sinking in mid-ocean, and the captain informs the passengers that in an hour all will be in eternity, even hardened natures are impressed by that solemn word. The great Welsh preacher, Christmas Evans, once began a sermon in the open fields before a congregation of many thousands, by saying over and over again, the word which in the Welsh language is equivalent to eternity, a word which, I am told, is in that language more sonorous and weighty even

than in our own. "Eternity!" "Eternity!" "Eternity!" he said in slow and solemn accents, looking at the great multitude which would soon be beyond the realm of earthly changes, and then, with eyes uplifted to heaven he spoke the word "eternity" thirty times over, until it seemed that the other world brought its solemnity down upon the waiting multitude. Men looked at each other with faces whitened by fear. Women sobbed and prayed, and hundreds cried to God to have mercy on their souls! May God make that word mighty to us. May God give every one of us that vision of values that comes to the dying saint when the breath of eternity kisses his face, and he knows that while heart and flesh are failing, God is the strength of his heart and his portion forever. Then he is amazed at the folly which, for a moment, could have preferred the perishable trifles of earth to the endur-

ing treasures of God, and which in so many, craves the selfish pleasures which are like glittering baubles, before those holy joys which are like the durable diamond ledges underlying the palaces of eternity. May the Holy Spirit lead each one of us unto Him who is from everlasting to everlasting, and who hath revealed to us redemption in Jesus Christ, whom to know aright is life eternal.

The Truth and Comfort of
Theism.

The Truth and Comfort of Theism. .

“Our Father which art in Heaven.”

— Matt. 6:6.

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IN the opening address of the Lord's Prayer is given a revelation of God beyond which, in its wealth of comfort and inspiration, we may not go. “Our Father,” is the ultimate address of humanity to God. “All knowledge which the sons of men shall gather in the cycled times” cannot add to it a single letter or change to sweeter melody its enchanting syllables. And this disclosure of the divine nature is an authoritative confirmation of the convictions, or, perhaps more accu-

rately, of the hopes of the human mind apart from the Scriptures.

Matter and motion point to God. But material elements and motions, however marvelous, furnish us no such revelation of God as is found in mind, the spirit of man that thinks and loves and chooses and worships. "Men," says Lowell, "go about to prove the existence of God. Was it a bit of phosphorus, that brain (of Shakespeare) whose creations are so real that mixing with them we ourselves appear like fleeting magic-lantern shadows?" To an undevout soul "this goodly frame, the earth," may seem, as it did to the bewildered Hamlet, only a "sterile promontory." "Even this most excellent canopy, the air," this majestic roof, this brave o'er-hanging firmament, fretted with golden fire, may appear to a dulled sensibility only "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors." But even poor Hamlet was forced

to exclaim, in admiration, “What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculties; in form and moving how express and admirable; in action, how like an angel; in apprehension, how like a god!” And hence we are not slow to believe the ancient words attributing all to Jehovah: “Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, Thou hast given him dominion over the works of Thy hands.”

The tiger walks the Indian jungle, fiercely conscious of power to attack and defend. The lion has his tooth and terrible paw and is king over beasts. But man has the Spirit of God, and therefore all obey him. The monsters crawl at his feet subdued. At his touch great commonwealths and capitals of civilization spring up from the prairie sod; deserts become gardens, mountains are leveled or pierced, continents are girded with iron, and the storm-

wind harnessed to his flying ships. He moves his wand and magnetic wires murmur through a thousand leagues of sea the intelligible speech of nations. He yokes the tides of the moon to his mill-wheel, and bids the strong earth by gravitation turn his million spindles. He magnifies his vision so as to peer into atoms and star-depths. No ape or elephant ever invented a microscope or took out a patent for a steam engine. Man alone is lord over nature. On him the giants and the fairies wait. "For him," as the poet-philosopher of New England has said, "the diving-bell of Memory descends into the deeps of our past and oldest experience, and brings up every lost jewel." For him Fancy "sends up her gay balloon into the sky to catch every gleam and tint of romance." For him "Imagination turns every dull fact into picture and poetry by making it the emblem of a thought." So that every re-

splendent faculty of our intellectual nature becomes a shining finger, pointing, not to the star-dust, but to Him who is enthroned above the stars, toward whom our hearts are uplifted as, taught and inspired by the Divine Man of Nazareth, we cry out, in filial adoration, "Our Father who art in heaven."

A stranger from another world, alighting on our earth, and desiring to learn something of the character of the king who rules it, might discover in the royal gardens a time-piece moved by water, like those contrivances which some of us have seen in Switzerland. Examining the water-clock, he might learn something of the ingenuity of the king or the king's servants. Suppose, however, that the king's own son should appear to the celestial visitor and converse with him about this mysterious clock, and explain its motions and speak of the solar and sidereal

systems whose movements are represented on the face of the dial ; and suppose that from this, the young prince should begin to reason about the origin of the Universe, and should show that his heart had been touched by the sublimity and beauty of Creation, and should invite the angel to kneel with him and adore the Maker and Mover of all things ; the heavenly stranger would learn from this prince's mind indefinitely more of the king's nature than from any mechanical contrivance, however marvelous. Man is the King's son ; the curious time-piece is this system of blazing wheels within wheels, which we call Nature ; and his soul is a nobler and completer revelation of the Being of God than all the resplendent and revolving galaxies of the heavens.

But in the mind of man we discover conscience, the organ and executive of the moral law, which declares that right should

be chosen and wrong should be avoided,— which speaks to us with a supremely authoritative voice : which, in the presence of every temptation, pronounces a divine negative that loses not one whit of its royal supremacy when mated with all the allurements of pleasure which beguiled Ulysses or Solomon ; and which, when we choose the right and refuse the wrong, stirs in our hearts a feeling of the approval of “Some One above ourselves that makes for righteousness.” What is the meaning of the moral law ? If you ask History, she answers, “God.” Pointing to the smoke of numberless sacrifices, she declares that men have deemed themselves accountable to a Supreme Being, and that the moral law is the source and occasion of that greatest fact of history, Religion. If you ask Philosophy what it means, she repeats her sublime axiom that every effect demands an adequate cause. The moral law is a stu-

pendous effect, and points together with all lower effects, to that Supreme First Cause for which, as Herbert Spencer has said, "we have more evidence than for any other truth whatever." If you make your appeal to the moral sense itself when touched by a feeling of remorse, you get an answer in the words of penitent David, "Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned."

Searching the nature of man we discover affections that hunger for a divine love ; we discover worshiping instincts and aspirations. Now this religious nature, this spiritual instinct, is itself a supreme evidence of God's being, from the fact that if God is not, the instinct is a liar's finger pointing us toward darkness and nothingness, when we expected to find the Eternal Father. If there be no God, then falsehood has been planted in the very center of our nature. But the presumption is against such an hypothesis. Only

the most overwhelming evidence could satisfy us that this monstrous supposition is true, and all the evidence points in the opposite direction. The analogies of the universe are strongly to the effect that, if there exist an organ of knowledge or power, or if there be any need in body or mind, these have their correlates in fact, in Nature. If you find in the fossil's skull of the megatherium an enormous eye-socket, you know that there once existed within that cavity an enormous eye, and, believing in the existence of an eye, you are confident that far back in the geologic ages there was light to correspond with that eye. If you see a bird's wing in a museum of extinct animals, you know there was air on the earth fitted to that wing's movements. From the sight of a fin you infer water. From the roots of a tree you infer soil for them to penetrate; from the long, flexible claws of a bird,

branches for them to cling to. Lungs imply an atmosphere, feet a solid earth. Hunger points to food and thirst to water.

The study of nature is a disclosure of correspondences. Marvelous are the properties of light and of sound, and when we remember that those vibrations in the ether which we call light, and those vibrations in the air which we call sound, form a language fitted to the soul of man and speaking to it in Beethoven's symphonies and Michael Angelo's frescoes, in the martial airs of patriotism and in the splendors of Raphael's pencilings, in the song of the bird and the beauty of the lily, in the thunder of the cataract and in the pensive loveliness of a New England landscape bathed in the dreamy light of October, in the glory of the sun-kissed waves and in the "undying baritone of the sea," ministering to human love and reverence, suggesting thoughts of joy and

sadness, exalting the heart to courage or quieting it with tenderness, or sending it upward in strong-winged aspiration toward heaven, we are confident that one God created the soul and these multitudinous and almost spiritual agencies which minister to its life. It would seem that Nature is a continual response to the spirit of man, that she never makes an organ or creates a need without supplying its correlate. Man has a desire for power, here is the earth for him to subdue; he has a desire for knowledge, here is the Universe for him to study; he has a sense of the beautiful, and lo! on every hand the fairy fingers of Nature have wrought in gorgeous dyes and finest fabrics the miracles of beauty which the æsthetic instinct needs.

Man is a creature with affections, and behold the many objects on which they fasten; father, mother, wife, children, home,

country, humanity. But man is also and above all a worshiping being, and shall he be cheated here, in the very sanctuary and palace of his soul? Is every other faculty true and correspondent with the nature of things, and this supreme faculty a lie, pointing only to illusion and falsehood? The construction of the world argues no, and with all its force asserts that, if there be a worshiping instinct there must be that which it requires. If man is a religious being, there must be One supremely adorable; if man is terrified before a broken moral law and rears an altar and puts upon it an expiatory sacrifice, there must be Some One, not himself and above himself, toward whom the moral law is pointing. If humanity, with all its sorrows and its baffled hopes and undefined longings, is needing an infinite Father to soothe and satisfy, and is feeling after Him if haply it may find

Him, even as a hungry child in the darkness cries for food and light, then there must be an Infinite Father with whom is food for love, and in whom is light for the soul.

Thus Christ's revelation comes in to re-inforce the best convictions of men and satisfy their deepest wants. The need of God, and of such a God as Jesus reveals, is so fundamental that you must almost unmake human nature itself to destroy its latent faith in a Divine Someone who is able to right human wrong and to console human grief. Much of the so-called culture of our time is an effort to eliminate God from human consciousness by fixing the mind on second causes, and by vainly endeavoring to satisfy the human heart with the thought of its own possible development in moral excellence, even though life ends with the grave. One distinguished man has left us an autobiography which is the

story of an attempt to eradicate God from the human soul. I scarcely know of a sadder or a more instructive book. It is only a few years since this great Englishman, John Stuart Mill, went down to his grave, leaving us an account of his lifelong education. A political economist, the first of his age, a logician equal to the greatest, a parliamentary debater, an advocate of liberty, a friend of our own country in her mortal struggle for existence, with a generous and heroic nature, cultivated beyond most men of his time, John Stuart Mill is doubtless a man worth studying, a modern man, our contemporary, living a fruitful, unselfish, and high-minded life. If we look into his career, let our examination be without any prejudices because he rejected the Christian faith and stoutly opposed many of our most cherished convictions. Let it be with tolerant sympathy and a candid desire to know whether the need of God is any part of

human nature. If I wished to assail unbelief in its strongholds, I would use the Autobiography of John Stuart Mill. No sensitive man can read the sad story without crying, "O God, save me from despair." I am not disposed to belittle this great antagonist of Christian philosophy, but rather to exalt him. There are enough embittered polemics that hate his name. The organized wrong of England always hated him. Toryism bellowed and brayed over his coffin, as it has bellowed and brayed over the reverses of many great men, from Milton to Gladstone. Let us not walk in these ways of bitterness. True wisdom seeks out the path of charity, "which the lion's whelp has not trodden nor the vulture's eye seen." I am willing to learn much from John Stuart Mill, remembering his own maxim that "none is more likely to see what you do not, than he who does not see what you do." This man investigated truth with the boldness

of Socrates and carried into public life a conscientious independence as royal as Charles Sumner's. He was true to God in conscience, though to him it was an unknown God. If I viewed only one aspect of this life, I should almost be a devotee of this great man, who has been described as a "marvelous compound of intellect and feeling, of chivalry and logic; the penetrating genius of Pascal and the generous heart of Fénélon, Adam Smith and Bayard, Aristotle and Petrarch in one."

Coming now to his life, as told by himself, we recall that his father, James Mill, author of the "History of British India," was a man who came to disbelieve Christian doctrine, and who held that nothing could be known of the origin of things. This forceful and accomplished man resolved to train his eldest son, John Stuart Mill, in accordance with his own very positive ideas. You may remember that,

at the age of three, the boy was set to learning Greek, and that before he was ten, his father had seen him read far more Greek than is required of the graduates of American universities. He began Latin at eight, and in four years had read the masterpieces of Roman literature, besides writing a history of Roman law that would make an octavo volume. His English reading up to this time was enormous, his father supervising all his studies and explaining the reasons for every task required, and to his father the boy recounted the substance of his investigations, so that knowledge was remorselessly drilled into him. He was kept from companionship with children, and shut up with men and books, so that he early became a "reasoning machine."

James Mill took conscientious care that his son should acquire his own convictions concerning religion. The belief in a per-

sonal God was never permitted to develop in his mind. It was resolutely repressed. "I am thus," said John Stuart Mill, "one of the few examples in this country of one who has never thrown off a religious belief, but never had it. I grew up in a negative state in regard to it. I looked upon modern, as I did upon all ancient religion, as something which in no way concerned me." In his Autobiography he never refers to his mother, and it would seem that no impressions were allowed to come from her. He was to be trained rationally, and by his father's rigorous hand. A motherless childhood! Do you wonder that it ushered in a godless manhood? When we think of St. Monica's prayers for her son Augustine, when we think of the pious petitions of the mothers of Wesley and Washington, we believe that in the mind of God they outweighed the hard philosophies of James Mill.

And yet moral instruction was earnestly given to our young scholar. His favorite book through life was the "Reflections of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus," the Roman Stoic emperor. He learned to scorn all baseness and insincerity. The time came, however, when Mill's self-education began, and when, instead of the iron hand of his father, was his own independent choice. And after years of sharp contact with the best minds of England, after long courses of intellectual discipline which were severer than any athlete's training for physical contests, there came a crisis in his mental history. He began to ask, "For what is all this culture? What is the purpose of these efforts for the public good? Suppose that you attain all that you are seeking, will you be satisfied?" He answered, "No." "The whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down." He says, "I seemed to have nothing left

to live for." "In vain I sought relief in my favorite books ; I became persuaded that my love of mankind and of moral excellence for its own sake had worn itself out ;" and then he adds these suggestive words : "If I had loved any one sufficiently to make confiding my griefs a necessity, I should not have been in the condition I was." I cannot help remembering that the Apostle Paul's love for mankind and for moral excellence never seemed to himself worn out, because his heart had been touched by God's heart on the Cross, and for him to live was Christ. It makes a vast difference with man's outlook into life whether or not he has received the New Testament revelation of the divine nature as love.

If love is the divine artificer and governor of the material, mental, and moral universe ; if that blessed name describes the heart of the Almighty who awes us by the sublimity of his creations ; if love is

the nature of that Being whose continual activity in the marvels of earth and sea and sky is the life-long study of the naturalist, the mathematician, and the astronomer; if this infinite cosmos is the home of an ever-present benevolence, and the palpitating ether throbs from star to star with the onflowing and overflowing billows of love; if this precious and peculiar grace which makes what joy we know on earth, has been enthroned in the royalty of supreme and eternal dominion over force and law, over the motions of spheres and the mutations of time, over national and individual life, over our birth and discipline and toils and griefs, over our homes and our graves, our present and our future; if all the altars built to the unknown God have been unconsciously offering incense to this innermost and sublimest attribute of deity; if the divine Some One whom Socrates and Plato revered, and Eastern poets

worshiped on Persian hilltops, rosy with the streamers of the dawn, is best named in the language of the Asiatic peasant who wrote so confidently that "God is love," then we have a truth and a treasure which cheapens the learning of proud universities and the diadems of prouder kings. Had the soul of John Stuart Mill been open, not only to the riches of human thought, but to the sight of God's personal love, no such plaint as he has recorded would have broken from his heart.

But he escaped from his father's narrowness and set resolutely to work to cultivate the neglected part of his nature, the feelings. From Christian sources, yet having no Christian faith, he fed his emotional nature. He became the associate of Coleridge and of John Stirling, of Carlyle and of Frederick D. Maurice, "of all God's men late left, the most divine!" He even learned to love the poetry of Wordsworth,

who, more than any other modern, perceived and felt the presence of God in Nature. Thus, to a degree, the frozen music in this logical machine was thawed out. He came to feel that he might recover from his depression and despair by living for others. We are not surprised to find him a chivalrous apostle of the oppressed, filled with enthusiasm for humanity. Let no one think it a discredit to the Christian Gospel that the life of this unbeliever was a prolonged devotion to human welfare, for enthusiasm for man is the living inspiration of Christianity, and Stuart Mill was unconsciously the child of eighteen Christian centuries, "the heir to old Judea's gift of sacred fire," living in an atmosphere permeated with Christian thought. In his heart there was that which paganism did not teach him. Unwittingly this student of the heathen emperor, Marcus Aurelius, became the

disciple of the Nazarene Jesus. A man often walks in the cold light of the October moon with no grateful thought of the sun whose reflected splendor silvers the autumn fields. So Mill had much of the light of Christianity, without its personal warmth and consolation. He cherished bright hopes for humanity, but none for individual men. These hopes for the race, however, are the gifts of Christianity. Paganism ever faces the past, and dreams of a golden age far back in the twilight of history. The Gospel of Christ faces the future, and points to a new heaven and a new earth "with joy and love triumphing and fair truth." Without Christianity, Stuart Mill, hopeless for himself and the individual, might also have been hopeless for the race, and we should think of him as a stony sphinx, guarding the dull, gray pyramid of a worn-out past, and not as a westward-looking prophet whose

mind, though half-illumined, still thronged

“with shining auguries,
Circle on circle, bright as seraphim,
With golden trumpets silent, that await
The signal to blow news of good to men.”

We come now to the final stage of Mill's culture, and having seen his young mind thoroughly emptied of God, having seen him cherishing great hopes for the world, though none for individuals, and having heard him confessing the need of a supreme affection, we are not surprised at this latest development. In 1830, at the age of twenty-four, he began a friendship, which he calls “the honor and chief blessing of his existence, as well as the source of a great part of all he attempted to do or hoped to effect thereafter for human improvement.” He was introduced to the lady, who after twenty years of friendship, became, on the death of her husband, his wife. She was not deemed a remarkable

woman by others, but with more than the usual enthusiasm of love, John Stuart Mill believed that he had found in her a combination of all the finest qualities he had known in the greatest men. This cool-headed philosopher deliberately writes that she was "more of a poet than Carlyle" and "more of a thinker than himself." "Her mind included Carlyle's," and, he adds, "infinitely more." He devoutly believed her to be possessed of the qualities, intellectual and moral, of a "consummate artist, a great orator, an eminent ruler and spiritual leader of mankind." In her "the strongest justice was linked with boundless generosity and lovingness;" "the most genuine modesty was combined with the loftiest pride." "Her sincerity and simplicity were absolute," and Mill says that his intellectual indebtedness to her was "almost infinite." He detected no flaw in the perfection of her wisdom and no

slightest stain on the beauty of her character. For her he scorned the scorn of English society, and, though pure as the day, neglected its usages. To her this positive philosopher gave himself with a devotion as fervent as was ever given to the Virgin Mary. Of her he writes almost as St. John might have written of the Lord Christ. Who can read without astonishment, and almost without tears, the dedication of the *Essay on Liberty*! “To the beloved and deplored memory of her who was the inspirer and in part the author of all that is best in my writings, the friend and wife whose exalted sense of truth and right was my strongest incitement, and whose approbation was my chief reward, I dedicate this volume. . . . Were I but capable of interpreting to the world one-half the great thoughts and noble feelings which are buried in her grave, I should be the medium of a greater benefit to it than

is ever likely to arise from anything that I can write unprompted and unassisted by her all but unrivaled wisdom."

In 1851, Stuart Mill was married to this idol in whose mind he could "detect no mixture of error." For seven and a half years the devotee and his saint belonged to each other, and then she was taken to the God in whom she also did not believe. "For seven and a half years," says the Autobiography, "that blessing was mine; for seven and a half only. I can say nothing which could describe, even in the faintest manner, what that loss was and is. But because I know that she would have wished it, I endeavor to make the best of what life I have left, and work on for her purposes with such diminished strength as may be derived from thoughts of her and communion with her memory." That memory became his religion. She had been laid to rest in the south of France,

in sunny Avignon, and year after year this remorseless logician went thither and wept over her grave. Amid the cypress trees he walked, and looking vainly to the east and the west, the north and the south, he cried an exceeding great and bitter cry, that seems an echo of Mary's voice from the garden: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

You ask me, What does all this mean? It means that John Stuart Mill's heart had revenged itself; that he who had no God to love had clothed with divine perfections a creature of God and worshiped that. And is there anything sadder than this? A chivalrous soul, blind to God, gives its great affections to one human being, whom love deified, and losing her, cares to live only because she wished it, and derives strength only from communion with her memory! A son of God living on the

recollection of a brief gladness that could never return, for no flower of hope bloomed on the sunny grave in Avignon. "Truly if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." Many a martyr going to the stake repeating the words of the Son of Mary, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," is far less pitiable than this blight-smitten philosopher without God and hence without hope in the world. "Among those born of women" in these latter days, there has scarcely risen a greater than John Stuart Mill. Nevertheless in privilege and hope, "he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he."

Mill's broken heart might have envied the faith in God which has made the cabin of many a dying slave the vestibule of immortality. Had not the great logician met a logic sterner than his own, that of Death? Does not human need equalize

all and demonstrate religion? It has been said that "the theorizing of ages is compressed as in a seed, in the momentary want of a single mind." And who of us could stand with the despairing philosopher by that grave in Southern France, without praying that his heart might open to David's God who never dies and who alone satisfieth the longing soul? The life which began without God ended without Him. A deified friend assumed the place of Jehovah, except that the one faded as a leaf, while the other is from everlasting to everlasting. And I cannot point to this nineteenth century argument for the truth and comfort of Christian theism without a vain regret that Mill had not omitted a few volumes of Greek and Roman history from his father's library and early learned the Lord's Prayer, "at that best Academe, a mother's knee," for then his life might have ended with Paul's, Milton's, Bunsen's, at

the sapphire gates of the New Jerusalem, and not in despair at the marble jaws of a sepulcher.

The foremost need of every soul is to accept in full confidence Christ's revelation of God. We who say "Our Father" must also add, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done." God is. Everything affirms that. He is near to us. The moral law declares that. He is our Father, Christ has revealed it. Our hearts know it. We need Him. Our lives tell us that. Then why not speak to Him, asking His help and pity and pardon? Why not go in every doubt and darkness to Him who is the light itself? Is it any dishonor to seek wisdom from Him to whom prayer has been offered by Dante and Copernicus, Kepler and Pascal, Sir Isaac Newton and Linnæus and Faraday? I seem yet to see on an island-shore a great man's head bowed in prayer. He

is no common mind. "To be in his presence an hour," it was said of him, "was to gain the strongest argument for the immortality of the soul." A great poet has pictured his "forehead high and round, a cairn which every science helped to build." It is Agassiz with his pupils about him, the master and his school, standing before Nature. This man is no fanatic. The ages of human culture roll their wealth to his feet as the Atlantic rolls its tides. His life's study has been matter, but he knows with Lord Bacon that mind is behind it. He has watched the miracle of moving life in star-fish and eagle. And he knows with his master Aristotle, that all motion has its origin in will. And there he stands, child of the nineteenth century, on the Ocean's shore.

"Over rock and isle and glistening bay
Falls the beautiful white day."

The master is about to speak to his scholars. Will he say, "Study Nature, trusting to yourselves, leaving all superstition behind you. God is unknown and unknowable"?

"Said the Master to the youth,
We have come in search of truth,
Trying with uncertain key
Door by door of mystery;
We are reaching through His laws
To the garment-hem of cause,
Him, the endless, unbegun,
The Unnameable, the One
Light of all our light the source,
Life of life, and force of force.
By past efforts unavailing,
Doubt and error, loss and failing,
Of our weakness made aware,
On the threshold of our task
Let us light and guidance ask,
Let us pause in silent prayer.
Then the Master in his place,
Bowed his head a little space,

And the leaves, by soft airs stirred,
Lapse of wave and cry of bird,
Left the solemn hush unbroken
Of that wordless prayer unspoken,
While its wish on earth unsaid
Rose to heaven interpreted."

Agassiz is dead, but flowers of hope bloom about the rough Alpine boulder which marks his grave in Mount Auburn, flowers which blossom not above that grave in Southern France. But being dead he yet speaketh, speaketh of a life beyond, in which he believed, and of which his great spirit was a prophecy.

" In the lap of sheltering seas
Rests the Isle of Penikese ;
But the lord of the domain
Comes not to his own again :
Where the eyes that follow, fail,
On a vaster sea his sail
Drifts beyond our beck and hail ;

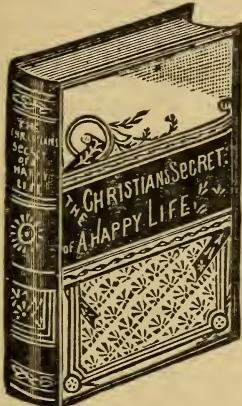
But one name forevermore
Shall be uttered o'er and o'er
By the waves which kiss that shore.
Thither love shall tearful turn,
Friendship pause uncovered there,
And the wisest reverence learn
From the Master's silent prayer."

Fruitless is all knowledge if it does not lead us in adoration or in penitence to our knees. The knowledge of God is a terror and despair, if his children may not speak to Him. We have ascended the golden steps which lead to our Father's threshold; let us entreat Him to open the door that his glory may smite our faces. Let us seek His mercy, lest when His anger is kindled but a little, we be utterly consumed. Let all who believe that God is, test Him now and henceforth if He heareth and answereth prayer.

“For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

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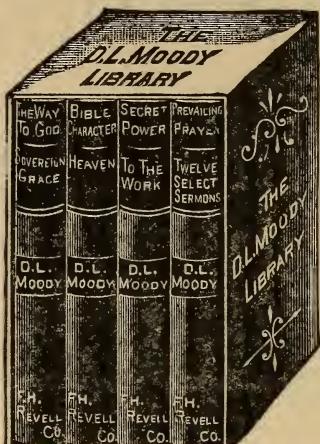
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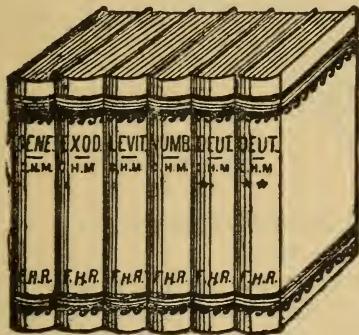
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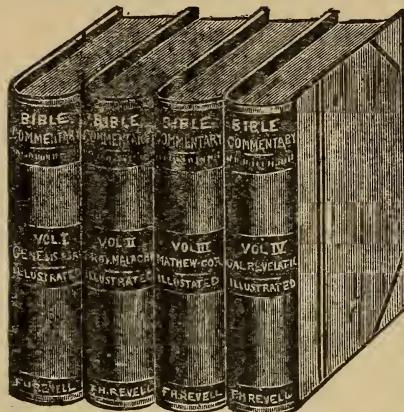
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